

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for facilitating manufacturing, said method comprising:

generating a computer model of an object using a design program;

automatically extracting at least a portion of the computer model from the design program and automatically inputting the extracted portion into a planning program; and

fabricating the object using the planning program.

2. A method in accordance with Claim 1 further comprising automatically selecting at least one tool based on the planning program.

3. A method in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said automatically inputting at least a portion of the computer model into a planning program comprises automatically inputting at least a portion of the computer model into a planning program including a plurality of operations to fabricate the object.

4. A method in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said automatically inputting at least a portion of the computer model into a planning program comprises automatically inputting at least a portion of the computer model into a planning program configured to recognize at least one of a subassembly and a part not selected by an operator and automatically update a list of operations to fabricate the object.

5. A method in accordance with Claim 4 wherein said automatically updating the planning program comprises automatically modifying a tooling list.

6. A method in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said automatically inputting at least a portion of the computer model into a planning program comprises automatically inputting at least a portion of the computer model into a planning program including a tooling list.

7. A method for facilitating manufacturing, said method comprising:

generating a computer model of an object using a design program;

automatically inputting at least a portion of the computer model into a planning program configured to recognize at least one of a subassembly and a part not selected by an operator and automatically update the planning program;

automatically selecting at least one tool based on the planning program; and

fabricating the object using the planning program.

8. Apparatus for facilitating manufacturing, said apparatus comprising:

at least one manufacturing tool; and

a computer coupled to said manufacturing tool and configured to:

generate a computer model of an object using a design program;

automatically input at least a portion of the computer model into a planning program; and

fabricate the object using the manufacturing tool based on the planning program.

9. An apparatus in accordance with Claim 8, wherein said computer further configured to automatically select at least one tool based on the planning program.

10. An apparatus in accordance with Claim 8, wherein said computer further configured to automatically input at least a portion of the computer model into a planning program including a plurality of operations to fabricate the object.

11. An apparatus in accordance with Claim 8, wherein said computer further configured to automatically input at least a portion of the computer model into a planning program configured to recognize at least one of a subassembly and a part not selected by an operator and automatically update a list of operations to fabricate the object.

12. An apparatus in accordance with Claim 11, wherein said computer further configured to automatically modify a tooling list.

13. An apparatus in accordance with Claim 8, wherein said computer further configured to automatically input at least a portion of the computer model into a planning program including a tooling list.

14. Apparatus for facilitating manufacturing, said apparatus comprising:

at least one manufacturing tool; and

a computer coupled to said manufacturing tool and configured to:

at least one of generate a computer model of an object using a design program and receive a computer model of an object generated using a design program;

automatically input at least a portion of the computer model into a planning program configured to recognize at least one of a subassembly and a part not selected by an operator and automatically update the planning program;

automatically select at least one tool based on the planning program;
and

fabricate the object using the fabricating tool based on the planning program.

15. A computer for facilitating manufacturing, said computer configured to:

at least one of generate and receive a computer model of an object generated using a design program; and

automatically input at least a portion of the computer model into a planning program.

16. A computer in accordance with Claim 15, wherein said computer further configured to automatically select at least one tool based on the planning program.

17. A computer in accordance with Claim 15, wherein said computer further configured to automatically input at least a portion of the computer model into a planning program including a plurality of operations to fabricate an object.

18. A computer in accordance with Claim 15, wherein said computer further configured to automatically input at least a portion of the computer model into a planning program configured to recognize at least one of a subassembly and a part not selected by an operator and automatically update the planning program.

19. A computer in accordance with Claim 18, wherein said computer further configured to automatically modify a tooling list.

20. A computer in accordance with Claim 15, wherein said computer further configured to automatically input at least a portion of the computer model into a planning program including a tooling list.